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MECHANIZATION METHODS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS IN IVORY COAST

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MECHANIZATION METHODS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORESTS IN IVORY COAST

by G. DE LA MENSBRUGE, Directeur du Centre Technique Forestier Tropical de Côte d'Ivoire

Timber production has been on the increase ever since World War II, with the exception of 1952. Statistics show a tenfold increase throughout the period from yearly average of 100.000 cubic meters to one million cubic meters.

This phenomenon, which can be found also in other big producing countries may be ascribed to the increasing use of mechanical means for felling and transport.

In the past, production relied mainly on manual labour for opening roads, felling, cutting, logging and all other kinds of work. Since a few years ago these various steps were undertaken with the help of mechanical means. This equipment, which is very costly (an average of 40 millions Fr. CFA for every square mile of working area) has had as a consequence the concentration of production in the hands of powerful companies and the elimination of small producers.

However, this evolution of production has had some satisfactory consequences :

- lowering of log production costs on cutting areas
- increasing distance between cutting areas and harbors
- discovery of new floristic areas and increase of the number of commercialized species
- improvement of yields in terms of footage commercialized per square mile of felling area
- production of more diversified species (more than 30) and consequently satisfaction of a more complete variety of needs.

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